

Participation

What Lake Louise needs is a sound use plan

The long-range development of the Lake Louise area needs thought and care for the environment. Hodge-podge development will not be allowed and some sensible plan must emerge for orderly growth. A plan is essential.

Parks Canada, as the managers of Banff National Park, has identified three major elements in the planning program. The area for some development has been selected — the valley bottom, where the Trans-Canada Highway runs and where facilities for visitors now exist. It is generally conceded that what exists isn't enough to accommodate the thousands who visit the famous beauty spot every year, in summer and winter.

The development plan must take into account the visitor needs in all seasons. Once upon a time, there was an "on season" and an "off season" in Lake Louise; the on season lasted from July to the end of August, when children were out of school and families did their travelling. But a change in visitor habits has developed over the last few years — Lake Louise is popular the year round, although the heaviest use time is still summer.

So the plan must recognize the change in use patterns and provide facilities for year-round visitor use — for hikers, skiers, the elderly who prefer to see the famous lake from the car and who might stay overnight, and the ardent wilderness enthusiast who wants to get away from it all and commune with Nature on his own terms.

Dear Participant:

Those of you who took part in the 1972 hearings on the Village Lake Louise development proposals will realize how important it is to become involved once more with this issue.

You will recall that the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs at the time rejected proposals presented at the '72 hearings. The Canadian public indicated then that a more modest development scheme was required.

Parks Canada's planning activities this year are concentrating on development plans for the valley bottom and I would like to enlist your help in deciding how far that development should go. Public involvement and opinion will play a major role in the decisions that are finally made.

A two-way system of information is required and this

Dear Participant:

As Parks Canada's program manager for the Lake Louise development plan, I can assure you that your contributions will be valuable in determining the future of this area. National parks policy will guide the hands of the planners and the consultants but the public's contribution is relevant as well. We want to know what you'd like to see in this area, because you are the users entrusted — as much as Parks Canada is — with this heritage which we must hand over unimpaired to future generations.

Preservation versus use is an old conflict in national parks planning. It will never be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone and I don't expect the Lake Louise development planning to settle that conflict once and for all. But what is clear is this — the needs of visitors to Lake Louise are not being met now and something must be done to improve the

It isn't difficult to know the reasons why visitors come to Lake Louise; it is a great piece of God's handiwork — and worth the homage paid it. But their method of travel needs more than a quick scrutiny, the utilities they need on arrival and the best use of the land to serve them require more than an occasional thought... if what they came to see is to be preserved for those who would follow them.

What Parks Canada has done is to hire three professional consulting firms who will provide the valuable information on land use, transportation and the utilities. We expect their studies to be finished inside one year. Who the companies



first issue of Participation is one of Parks Canada's attempts to keep you in touch with what is going on. Subsequent newsletters will try to keep you up to date on the planning progress.

But it is necessary that we hear from you too and I would like to encourage you to read the information we send out and provide us with your comments, concerns and ideas about all the planning and development proposals. You should make those concerns known to Parks Canada, and we will make them known to the planning consultants whose names are given in this issue and the many committee members whose names, addresses and telephone numbers are also contained here for you.

William Turnbull
Director
Parks Canada's Western Region
Calgary.

lot of the visitor, without wrecking one of the loveliest spots on earth. That thought guides Parks Canada's thinking.

How to accomplish it? Technical planning studies are proceeding hand-in-hand with environmental and discussion groups. Likely, those groups will tell us what is possible with the available natural resource. They will predict the impact of people on the area. How much impact should visitors have on the area? How much hurt should it suffer? Planners and consultants can guide our way in providing answers to these questions. But Banff National Park is everybody's business and the views of the public are being solicited because you have a stake in it too. Planners need direction as well and I hope you will support this planning effort by exhibiting your concern through being informed and then telling us what it is you think about this development.

Eugene Gillespie

are and what they have been asked to do can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

They are one element in the planning program. Two others exist.

Never before has man been as concerned with the shape of his earth and its use (and preservation) as he is now. He is more acutely aware of his environment than ever before. As Mark Twain pithily put it, when asked by a friend how he should invest his money: "Put it in land, they ain't making any more." True, they ain't. So there are those who would make the best use of what we've got and tolerate no destruction of it.

Environmental studies will proceed at the same pace as the utilities, transportation and land use experts are conducting their designs for Lake Louise. Parks Canada, given the task of managing Banff National Park, has been studying Lake Louise for some years and some conclusions have already been reached. More studies are being done, animal patterns, the flora, fauna and air pollution. Dr. Bruce Leeson is Parks Canada's chief environmental officer in its western region, but to make sure he is on the right track, an environmental advisory panel has also been appointed and this panel — top environmentalists all — will review and assess all the environmental studies done.

The public's contribution is the third element. It is no less important than the other two — if a good planning job is to be done for Lake Louise. Parks Canada is reaching out in many ways to involve the Canadian public in determining the long-range future of Lake Louise. This newsletter is part of that two-way information street. Parks Canada makes the promise that it will listen and incorporate in the final plan whatever sound suggestions are made. Your participation is invited — and Lake Louise's future almost demands it. Ways in which you can help are described throughout this newsletter.

Communication — two-way street

The public participation program to be conducted by Parks Canada is a two-way affair. Parks Canada, to get a reading on what an informed public would like to see in Lake Louise, will send information "out" to get information "in".

The information will be in newsletters such as this, press releases and information circulars to be distributed as work progresses. Newsletters will be distributed during the life of the planning process — hopefully every two months.

Meetings will also be organized on a face-to-face level with community associations, provincial and national groups, government agencies and groups who have shown a particular interest in the Lake Louise long-range development plans. Wherever possible, Parks Canada will respond to requests for special meetings at which planning consultants, members of advisory committees and other Parks Canada staff will be able to communicate directly with the public.

Before the final recommendations to the minister are written, the various alternatives for the entire area will be prepared and presented to the public. This will be done in two ways — by outlining the alternatives and possible options in print and then by holding public forums to discuss the alternatives.

Blue ribbon environmental team ready to go

The Natural History Research Section of Parks Canada under the direction of Dr. Bruce Leeson, has collected much information about the natural resources of the Lake Louise area.

This information will be used to predict and evaluate potential environmental reactions created by a variety of possible land uses. Guidance and advice about environmental costs and limitations will thereby become an integral part of the planning exercise.

Because this process is likely to be particularly complex, the advice of prominent environmental experts has been solicited. A panel of experts will review Dr. Leeson's work and provide guidance and imagination in interpretation and presentation of environmental information.

Panel members include:

- Andy Anderson, Chief Warden of Banff National Park

- Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, Dean Emeritus at the University of British Columbia
- Dr. Valerius Geist, professor at the University of Calgary
- Andy Russell, author and naturalist
- Dr. George Scotter, research scientist with the Canadian Wildlife Service
- Dr. Steve Herrero, professor at University of Calgary.

Prepared studies include a complete biophysical mapping (soil and vegetation); fish; winter mammal use of the area; the total weather picture for the area, including temperatures, humidity and wind activity; air quality and a profile of the snow formation in the area; plus a delineation of the ski areas.

This is a bird's eye view of Lake Louise. The lake is in the bottom left hand corner.

Traffic circulation mapping has been done along with the number of horse riders using the area. Existing and potential opportunities for cross-country skiing have been assessed and areas that already need rehabilitating have been identified. The important Bow River study has been finished.

In the backcountry, the water quality has been assessed, a portrait of the average visitor has been drawn and hiker and trail users have responded to questionnaires. Attitudes towards crowding on the trails have been garnered. The Boulder Pass area and the highway corridor have been examined.

An inventory of the trails has been compiled and various rehabilitation techniques have been tried.

By next fall, noise levels will have been established, the number of day-use hikers counted and a good description of the trails written.



Albertans in front rank as park public advisors

Question:

Who is handling the public participation process in the Lake Louise project?

Answer:

A group of concerned citizens led by a Parks Canada Western regional team composed of Syd Moore, the official public participation co-ordinator, Joanne Langham, who is the manager of the storefront-type operation at Lake Louise and Paul Lange, superintendent of Banff National Park.

Mr. Moore can be phoned at 231-4418 in Calgary; Joanne Langham can be reached at 522-3552 in Lake Louise and Supt. Lange is at 762-3324 in Banff.

For those who wish to write in, letters should be addressed to Lake Louise Project Manager, 134-11 Ave. S.E., Calgary, Alberta T2G 0X5.

A number of Albertans have already accepted invitations to join the public participation advisory committee. These persons are willing to talk to anybody about Lake Louise and they can be reached as follows:

In the Edmonton area:
Dr. Ross Hodgetts
Department of Genetics
University of Alberta
Phone 432-5379

Miss Val Blakely
104, 10324 - 119th St.
Edmonton.
Phone 482-5354

Dr. Elsie McFarland
7203 - 87th St.
Edmonton, Alta. T6G 3G1
Phone 466-8049

In the Calgary area:
Dave Gauthier
806 Radford Rd., N.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2E 5G2
Phone 276-6560

Dennis Anderson
1611 - 29 St. N.W.
Calgary, Alberta Phone 283-8241

In the park:
Cliff White
P.O. Box 88
Banff, Alberta T0L 0C0

Len Laughlin
P.O. Box 61
Lake Louise, Alberta T0L 1E0

Precisely, the public participation committee will:

- Evaluate the existing program and recommend action.
- Recommend new programs and opportunities for public involvement
- Assist in directing public inquiries
- Encourage public participation
- Monitor the public's contribution.

How well they succeed depends upon how the public responds

Consultants bring their skills to bear on problems

Three firms of consultants have been selected by Parks Canada to undertake assignments that need professional skills in the planning of Lake Louise.

The utilities consultant is directed to assess the existing services and to identify systems that would be capable of servicing developments proposed by others. The types of services they will study and identify include water supply, treatment and distribution; sewage treatment and disposal; garbage pickup and disposal; fuel and power supply and distribution; communication systems.

The land use consultants will identify requirements in accordance with need for visitors and residents. They will investigate the economics, propose architectural guidelines and identify land use patterns for such varied facilities as staff housing, community services for recreation, fire, police; commercial facilities such as restaurants; accommodation, gasoline outlets, grocery, laundramats; park operation and maintenance facilities.

An upper limit for additional overnight accommodation to serve 1,900 guests has been imposed by Parks Canada. This is less than half that proposed in 1972 and the limit reflects public input from the 1972 hearings.

The transportation consultant will study existing systems and propose solutions to meet the needs of new development proposals.

They will propose systems that would permit easy access to and from major transport corridors such as the Trans Canada Highway and 1A; easy access from the visitor centre in the valley to attractions such as the Lakeside and ski areas; local circulation — linkages between land uses, activity centres within the Visitor Services Centre.

Parks Canada has directed that development studies should concentrate on the valley floor as being the prime location for the Visitor Services Centre. This location has been chosen because it is central to summer and winter activities, would limit ribbon type development in other areas and would permit utilization of existing services already in the valley. If studies indicate constraints in the valley would prohibit proper development planning then other areas for some of the development would be studied.

Copies of the detailed Terms of Reference which guide the work of the consulting firms are available on request.

The utilities study will be undertaken by Reid, Crowther and Partners Ltd. This is a large firm of consulting engineers and planners with offices in many major Canadian cities. The firm employs a diversified, multi-disciplined staff of more than 300.

Planning for Lake Louise will be directed by the firm's

Calgary office under engineer John Atkinson, a partner in the firm whose responsibility is managing the environmental analysis division.

Responsible for the land use planning component of the work will be the I.B.I. Group of Calgary. This firm has offices in five major Canadian cities and has more than 100 professionals on staff. It provides consulting services in four major areas — urban-regional planning; architecture; urban design and facility development; transportation and management-computer sciences.

Larry Sherman will be I.B.I.'s director on this Lake Louise project and the company's principal planner will be Ross Hayes. Associated with I.B.I. for this project is Calgary landscape architect Len Novak and Dr. Robert Scace, a

geographer and an authority on parks in Western Canada.

DeLuw Cather, Canada Ltd., will conduct the transportation part of the study. This is a national firm of consulting engineers and planners who offer a complete range of services in transportation planning, engineering and economics. This firm has also had extensive experience with transportation projects in national parks.

Most of this firm's team members are from the Calgary area and their Edmonton office. Overall project director for DeLuw Cather is R. W. Bowes, the firm's chief transportation planning engineer. The company has appointed Andy Vandertol as project manager. Mr. Vandertol is senior transportation planner for the company's Western operations.

Visitors have place in planning

You can become personally involved in developing a long-range plan by following one or more of the following methods:

- Read the information you receive. Compare it with other information you have gathered
- Phone Parks Canada or a committee member near you to get specific information that you need
- Write for information to: Lake Louise Project Manager
Parks Canada
134 - 11 Avenue S.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2G 0X5
- If you are in or visiting Lake Louise visit the storefront. Find out what is happening right where it will happen. Leave your comments!
- Get your group together and schedule at least one meeting to discuss the planning of that Lake Louise area

- Invite a speaker to your next meeting
- Strike a study committee for a report
- Prepare a submission
- Appoint a delegate to attend workshops and open houses
- Don't wait to submit a lengthy, well-written brief — a few lines, a phone call, a letter at any time will be effective. (But briefs are welcomed.)
- Be sure to follow the newspapers for announcements concerning meetings, open house programs and workshops, which discuss the Lake Louise Visitor Services Centre
- Youngsters could select a topic from the Lake Louise Planning Program to write a term paper, or do a class project.

Return to: Parks Canada
Expédiez à: Parcs Canada
134 - 11 Avenue, S.E., Calgary, Alberta T2G 0X5

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Policies...and Problems

The following excerpts have been taken from the Report of the Public Hearings, Mountain Parks and Lake Louise Area of 1974. They were selected because they pertain to Parks Canada policy interpretation, purposes and objectives that are especially pertinent to visitor services centres and particularly Lake Louise.

The public hearing on planning proposals for the Lake Louise area was unlike previous hearings in that it dealt with a relatively small area within Banff National Park, rather than with a provisional master plan for an entire park. While our documents covered general plans for the 750 square-mile Lake Louise area, the main issue was the proposal submitted by Village Lake Louise Ltd. for redevelopment of the existing visitor services centre.

The proposal was rejected because it was too large and could possibly have resulted in environmentally unacceptable concentrations of visitors in the Lake Louise area. There still exist, however, the problems of meeting the essential needs of an increasing number of visitors to this area both in summer and in winter, and of through traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Leave unimpaired

Section 4 of the National Parks Act reads:

"The Parks are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to the provisions of this Act and the regulations, and such Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

This broad statement of purpose is open to a variety of interpretations. Changes in interpretation over the years since the Act was passed in 1930 have reflected the changing values of Canadians. Interpretations vary from one region of Canada to another depending upon experience, outlook, the degree of development and urbanization, availability of alternatives, and other factors.

Parks Canada and Canadian park users face the problem of striking a balance which will reflect contemporary Canadian values, but which must also permit sufficient flexibility to accommodate widely different circumstances across the country.

Our heritage

Parks Canada's interpretation of Section 4 can be stated, in general, as follows: the national parks are part of Canada's national heritage. They should be maintained as a trust in perpetuity so that Canadians now and in the future can view and experience undisturbed landscapes of exceptional and distinctive quality — their landforms, plants and wildlife — existing in as nearly a natural state as possible. Some deviation from the "natural" state, as a result of current or historic human activity, exists to varying degrees in all national parks and in areas being considered for new parks. For historic and cultural reasons, this should not be totally erased. Although preservation of the natural state is a primary objective, Canadians must be able to visit their national parks and thus obtain "benefit, education and enjoyment" as specified in the Act.

Moreover, protection of the parks and their flora and fauna involves management since their scale is relatively small and their location as enclaves makes it impossible to permit complete natural regulation by means such as fire, wildlife over-population, contagious plant and animal disease etc. The debate on purpose and role of national parks must be brought down from the generalized "preservation versus use" theme, to the specifics of: What types of use? Where and to what degree are various types of use acceptable? What level or intensity of use? Or conversely, what degree of preservation of the natural state is appropriate to each specific area?

As natural systems differ, so must our responses to them.

Visitor limits

Present or future needs to limit the number of visitors to areas of national parks which are threatened by over use is an underlying theme of many discussions.

Indirect means of controlling the volume of visitors include limiting access and accommodation. The arguments presented at the hearings against the proposed visitor services centres, including Lake Louise, would limit the number of people who can stay overnight in the mountain parks by limiting accommodation.

Similarly, the limits placed on services for visitors to parks will have a bearing on the visitor volume. The size of the park and the amount of accommodation in areas adjacent to the park will also be significant factors.

Excludes Special Groups

These various devices, which may be valid on their own merits, are not fully satisfactory means of reducing visitation.

Denial of access and accommodation are discriminatory and would result in the exclusion of many Canadians — the very young, the aged, the disabled, family groups, wage earners with very limited holiday time or those who live far away from the parks. These, and others who require visitor service facilities, have the same rights as any group, subject, of course, to the overriding need to protect the parks from impairment.

If in the future it should be necessary to limit visitors it should be done directly (by such means as reservation systems or the like), in a way which would be fair to all, rather than by indirect methods — increased fees or difficult access opportunities, for example — which would bear most heavily on particular groups of individuals. Decisions concerning development of service facilities, accommodations, or roads, should be based on their environmental acceptability.

Eliminate cars

Many people supported public transit systems to reduce public roads and to eliminate the private automobile within the parks. There is no doubt that public transit is a direct means of controlling traffic and at the same time effectively directing visitors to specific areas and sites within a park. In addition, appropriate systems of this kind can provide access and enjoyment for many more Canadians than can the private automobile, and yet cause only a fraction of the noise, intrusion and disruption of cars with their requirements for roads, parking, service.

One of the guiding principles of national park management has been the need to make the parks available to all Canadians for appropriate forms of use, enjoyment and education. Parks Canada recognizes that the ever increasing popularity of the parks will inevitably result in some form of visitor limitation, but does not wish to restrict public visitation without first exploring possible alternatives.

To date, efforts have concentrated on improving systems and facilities, and on encouraging visitors to disperse throughout the parks so that the increased visitation can be handled with minimal additional impairment to the natural scene.

Damage done

In the four mountain parks it is inevitable that limitations will be imposed on the use of some trails and on access to particular sites due to the damage being created. Whenever possible the method followed will be to seek appropriate alternatives rather than resort to complete bans on access.

The Department agrees too that there is need for more research on elements of specific ecosystems; and need for environmental research, in particular, for environmental effects studies.

Three sites

Parks Canada has designated only three locations to be classed as visitor services centres. These are at Banff, Jasper and Lake Louise. These centres are intended to meet the essential needs of an increasing number of visitors to the area in an orderly and environmentally acceptable manner.

Parks Canada had previously proposed additional visitor services centres at Pocatons, Pokoban and Saskatchewan Crossing. This would have meant extensive additional development in these areas. In response to public representations, plans for these have been cancelled. These and other activity areas such as at Maligne Lake and Johnston Canyon will continue to offer services to visitors from existing facilities but additions that would be necessary to provide services on the scale of a visitor services centre will not be permitted.

Strategic location

Rejection of the Village Lake Louise Ltd. proposal does not alter the fact that the Lake Louise area is a strategic location for a visitor services centre; that visitor services have been provided there for many years; and that the area is in urgent need of redevelopment.

It is situated astride the Trans-Canada Highway and the railway, halfway between the towns of Golden, British Columbia, and Canmore, Alberta, and near the intersection of the Trans-Canada Highway and the Icefields Parkway. Present facilities in the area include Chateau Lake Louise, several motels, restaurants, stores and other service facilities. Over the years these have developed into an untidy arrangement, incapable of adequately meeting the needs of the ever-increasing numbers of visitors.

Transport routes

National parks policy accepts, as one of the facts of economic life, that transportation routes through the mountain parks are required in the national interest.

Parks Canada accepts the concept of transportation routes, where the national interest is concerned, and will define such routes in zoning plans for the parks. High standards of environmental control and environmental design will be demanded.

Public Transit

There are several small scale examples of public transit now operating in the four mountain parks, for example, aerial lifts, including the Sulphur Mountain lift, bus systems to Sunshine and to Lake O'Hara, and tour boats on Maligne and Minnewanka lakes. A public transit system to the various attractions in the Lake Louise area was part of the proposal put forward by Village Lake Louise Ltd. Even though the proposed development concept has been rejected, public transit is still being considered as part of the planning strategy for the Lake Louise area.